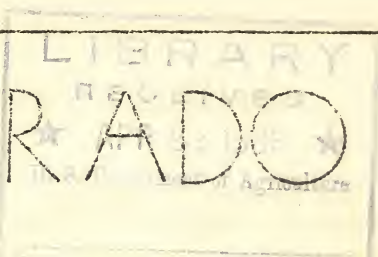


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COLORADO CONSERVANCY



PROJECT 01-8
COLORADO SPRINGS
COLORADO

MARCH & APRIL

1936

THE SENSE OF COMMON SENSE FARMING

The official opening of Spring on March 21st found a noticeable lack of moisture, particularly sub-soil moisture, throughout the dryland area of eastern Colorado. This deficiency of moisture is of immediate concern for the next six weeks since no farming activities can begin until the event of snow or rainfall.

Similar conditions existed last year at the same time. The long dry spell of 1935 broke during May when gentle rains were followed by torrential downpours on the closing days of the same month. Many fields had been planted and the soil losses caused by the heavy rains resulted in tremendous losses to these agricultural lands. Tons of top-soil were lost because of the up and down hill system of farming then used.

This year will find a new type of farming that has been termed "common sense" farming, farming "on the level" and contour farming. In all the demonstration areas of the Soil Conservation Service, as well as in the boundaries of several Soil Conservation Associations, this new method of farming will be inaugurated.

Contour farming means contour listing and strip cropping. Where soils are deep, terracing is being done. Contour farming prevents soil erosion, holds moisture where it falls and stores this moisture for crop use. The replacement of the old up and down hill farming method by the use of common sense practices will prevent the uncontrolled run-off of moisture. This method was tested last May when seven inches of rain fell on a contour listed field of six to eight percent slope. There was no loss of soil from the field. Today there is three feet of sub-soil moisture.

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Contributors--Soil Conservation Staff

A. E. McClymonds
District Director

MANY REQUESTS FOR THE SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

Up to March 1, 380 requests had been received from land owners wishing to sign co-operative agreements for work on their land. These 380 requests represent a total of 276,645 acres and to date 105,457 acres have been put under agreement, 71,983 acres of this area having been treated and finished.

The function of the Conservation Department, Soil Conservation Service, is the working out with the land-owner or tenant of a mutual agreement whereby erosion control practices can be incorporated in a land use plan for betterment of the farm.

Additional requests for the work are being received daily and the Conservation Department are expending every effort to facilitate the signing of agreements. The Department wishes to express their appreciation to all cooperators and prospective co-operators for their fine interest and aid in the drawing up of these agreements.

Dust storms have re-occurred throughout the "Dust Bowl" with an intensity rivaling that of last year. In the Springfield area, an interesting feature of the Soil Conservation work already completed is that the contour furrows are proving quite effective in breaking up the ground currents of wind and are collecting the blown soil in such a manner as to form miniature terraces which will back up water as well as prevent blow-off. These small terraces are adequately serving the purpose for which the original contours were constructed.

A good top-soil is prevalent in this locality and as the soil blown up to these contours contains a quantity of seed, it seems probable that the advent of moisture will tend toward the rapid revegetation of the furrows.

NURSERY

The nursery has available for immediate distribution 2,200,000 tree seedlings to all demonstration and camp areas. These seedlings have been received from Wyoming, Iowa and Nebraska and are one year old, varying in height from 10 to 18 inches. The greater percentage consist of Chinese Elm and Green Ash, with a lesser quantity of Honey Locust, Russian Olive and Hackberry. They will be distributed to all cooperators in both Camp and Regular Project areas as soon as planting conditions are deemed favorable.

By the Spring of 1937, the Nursery will have an estimated annual production of 10,000,000 broad-leaf trees. The first crop of Conifers will be available in 1939, as 3 years are required to produce stock suitable for transplanting.

Grasses of the Black Forest and Adjacent Highlands

Hairy Dropseed (Blepharoneuron tricholopis)

Hairy Dropseed is one of the most conspicuous grasses of the Black Forest region, due to its striking appearance and its habit of growing in exposed situations. The accompanying drawing shows very clearly the loose, much branched seed head, which stands 15 to 18 inches above the cluster of leaves at the base. An ability to invade raw, gravelly soils has allowed Hairy Dropseed to take possession of road cuts, gravel banks and newly cleared areas in the Forest, forming almost pure stands of considerable extent.

Hairy Dropseed seems to require the protection of the Forest and, at the same time, is unable to compete with the grasses of the meadows and open plains, so that its distribution is necessarily quite limited. However, it is quite palatable to stock, and wherever it occurs in stands that are not too inaccessible, it is of considerable value as a forage plant.

Scribner's Panicgrass (Panicum scribnerianum)

Scribner's Panicgrass resembles very closely its larger and better known relative, Switchgrass (Panicum virgatum). Like Switchgrass, Scribner's Panicgrass is characterized by its robust growth, heavy stems, a generally hairy aspect, and an open, branched seed head bearing a number of rather large, hard and smooth seeds. This grass ordinarily produces two seed crops each summer. The first head is produced rather early in the summer and reaches a height of 12 to 24 inches. In late summer, often after the first head has been grazed off, the old stem puts forth one or more short shoots which produce a few seeds. The drawing illustrates a stalk from which the spring seed head has been removed and which is producing an autumnal seed head.

Scribner's Panicgrass is common everywhere in the Black Forest. It extends for considerable distance out



Floret--
of Hairy
Dropseed



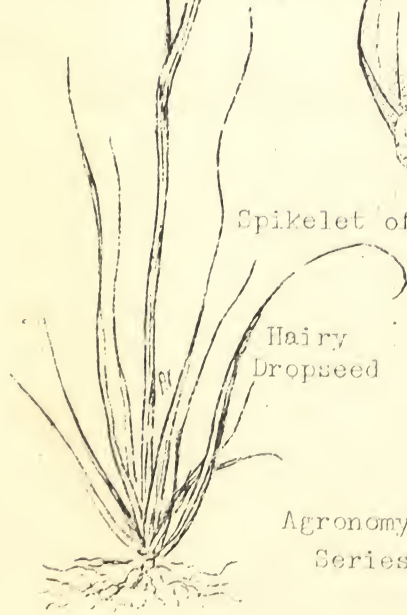
Glumes--
of
Hairy
Dropseed



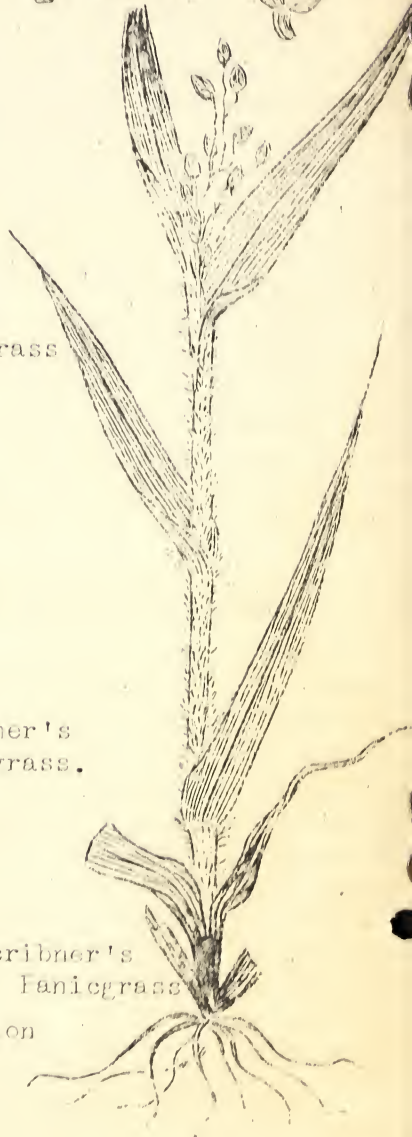
Floret of
Scribner's Panicgrass



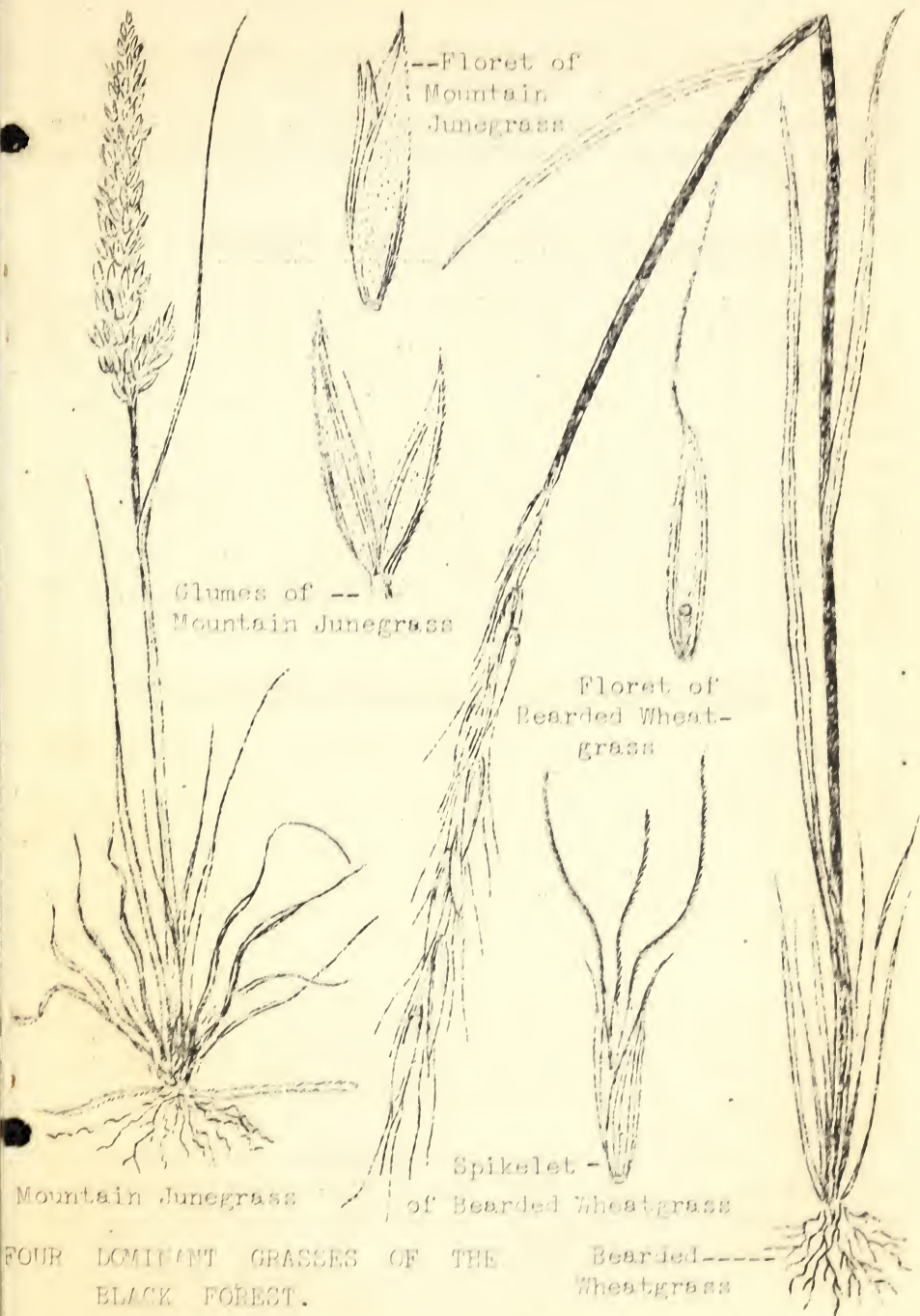
Spikelet of Scribner's
Panicgrass.



Hairy
Dropseed



Scribner's
Panicgrass



--Floret of
Mountain
Junegrass

Glumes of --
Mountain Junegrass

Floret of
Bearded Wheat-
grass

Spikelet -
of Bearded Wheatgrass

Mountain Junegrass

Bearded-----
Wheatgrass

FOUR DOMINANT GRASSES OF THE
BLACK FOREST.

6 into the plains in the meadowland along streams which arise in the Forest. Stock readily graze this grass when the leaves are young and succulent, but do not relish it later when the stems and leaves have become tough and dry.

Mountain Junegrass (Koeleria cristata)

Although widely distributed and important as forage in the prairies further eastward, this grass occurs only sparingly in our region. It is rather common in the foothills and in the Forest, but only in scattered stands. When in flower the head is rather loose and open, but forms a tight head when in seed, as shown in the drawing. The seed head is about natural size in the drawing. The stem ranges from only a few inches high on the plains to 15 to 18 inches in the Forest. The young green leaves are very desirable forage for all classes of stock, but the seed head is seldom touched.

Bearded Wheatgrass (Agropyron subsecundum)

Bearded Wheatgrass is very abundant throughout the Black Forest and in adjacent moist meadowlands. It occurs sparingly below the pines, but forms dense stands in clearings and open meadows. The plant is more slender and usually taller than Western Wheatgrass (Agropyron smithii), described in "Colorado Conservancy" for October, 1935. Its average height ranges from two to three feet.

The seed head is longer and more slender than the head of Western Wheatgrass and is slightly one-sided. The seeds each bear a short, straight awn, as shown in the drawing. The whole plant often has a distinct bluish-green color.

The herbage of this grass is grazed with relish by all classes of stock until the plant reaches maturity. After maturity the foliage is rather coarse and dry, and the awns are rather harsh.

Wayne W. Ward
Junior Agronomist

The relationship which the proper use of pastures and ranges bear to the control of run-off is important. It has been demonstrated time and time again that pastures can be improved by practicing deferred and rotated grazing. This improvement is apparent not only in the increased vegetation on the land itself, but also in the increase in the number of stock the pasture will eventually be able to carry, as well as the increased weight and better condition of the livestock.

Deferred and rotated grazing is a cheap, economical measure that requires little, if any, investment. Allowing one pasture to get a good growing start in the spring before grazing, is a procedure almost every operator can practice. Likewise, allowing a pasture to rest while seed is maturing before grazing will soon show remarkable results in increased yields and profit to the operator.

INFORMATION

If there is any farmer located in a Soil Conservation Demonstrational area who would like to have contour lines run in preparation for the coming season, please come in or write to The Department of Information, Soil Conservation Service, Colorado Springs, Colo.

This department is anxious to co-operate with the farmer and landowner in any possible way. If anyone wishes to take a trip over the Demonstrational areas, the department will welcome the opportunity of arranging such a tour.

MOISTURE IN THE "DUST BOWL"

After a severe duster on March 18, two tenths of an inch of rain fell in the Springfield area. This is the first precipitation in that area since September, 1935.

WARNING

Nature has again been good enough to warn us, by a perfectly synchronized drama of dust storms in the West and disastrous floods in the East, of the wrath that is brewing against our Western civilization unless we mend our ways. The two extremes, seemingly unrelated are absolutely facets of the same picture. The dust storms are not simply a matter of unavoidable drought but a result of the destruction of the living sod....What has this to do with the destructive floods throughout the East? This week traveling through the oldest Agricultural States of the Union, the writer has scarcely seen a place where the old top layer of soil is left. Careless methods of farming have allowed it to wash away in the last two and three centuries....It is this dark, spongy top layer of soil---What the specialists call the A-horizon---which is our only effective protection against flood. One can build dams downstream, construct mazes of levees and ditches and still not touch the source of the trouble. The water must be caught where it falls and the one thing that can arrest it and hold it in place is the dark A-horizon of the soil.

Reprint from "TIME" March 30, 1936.

Article by Professor Paul B. Sears, Botany Department, University of Oklahoma.

MORE DUST

On March 31 the worst dust storm of the year struck Southeastern Colorado. At Springfield visibility was zero and Superintendent Beehler of the Soil Conservation CCC Camp reported the area engulfed in a "black-blizzard". The dust was visibly far up into the central part of the state, a heavy pall of dust hanging over Colorado Springs all day.

MEETING DATES
FOR
SOIL CONSERVATION ASSOCIATIONS

Prowers County.....At call of President

Lincoln County.....1st Sat. in March, June,
September and December

Kit Carson County No. 1....1st Sat. in November,
February, May and August

Upper Kiowa Creek.....1st Sat. in November,
February, May and August

Cheyenne County.....1st Sat. in December,
March, June and September

Baca County.....At call of President

Butte Valley.....At call of President

S. E. Las Animas County....1st Monday of each month

N. E. Las Animas County....1st Saturday of each month

S. W. Bent County.....2nd Tuesday of each month

Upper Running Creek.....1st Saturday in March,
June, September and
December

Burnt Mill.....1st Monday in April and
November

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

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